



amazing THAILAND

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PHUKET

Luxuriantly verdant Phuket is Thailand's largest island (approximately the size of Singapore) and nestles against the Andaman Seas coast 862 kilometers south of Bangkok.

Phuket traditionally derives its wealth from tin and rubber. Blessed with teeming marine life, it has enjoyed a rich and colorful history -- Phuket's most famous landmarks is the monument to the heroines **Thao Thep Kasattri** and **Thao Sisunthon** who rallied islanders to repel Burmese invaders in 1785.

The island is blessed with magnificent coves and bays, powdery, palm-fringed white beaches, sparkling island-dotted seas, genuinely hospitable people, comfortable accommodations, superb seafood, tropically vegetated mountains, lovely waterfalls and parks, and delightful turn-of-the-century Sino-Portuguese-influenced architecture which create an enchanting ambiance perfectly suited to total relaxation.

How to Get There

By car: Start from Bangkok using the Thonburi-Pak Toh route (highway No. 35) and on to highway No. 4 passing the provinces of Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khirikan and Chumpon, then the districts of Kraburi, Muang and Kapur of Ranong, Kuraburi, Takua Pa, Muang, Takua Tung and Ban Kokkloi of Pang-nga, across the Thao Thep Kasattri or Sarasin Bridge to Phuket Island, a total of 862 kilometers.

By bus: There are daily regular and air-conditioned Bangkok-Phuket services. For regular service, contact the Transport Company Tel. 434-7192 (air-conditioned) or Tel. 434-5557-8 (non-air). For privately-run coach service, call the Phuket Central Company (435-5019) or Phuket Travel (435-5018), or the Phuket Bus terminal at (076)211480.

By rail: There are no direct train services to Phuket. Travelers by train must get off at Phun Phin railway station in Surat Thani and continue by regular buses to Phuket. More information is available from the Travel Service Unit of the State Railways of Thailand (Tel: 223-7010, 223-7020).

By air: Daily services by Thai Airways International. Call 280070-90 in Bangkok or (076) - 211195 & 212499 in Phuket for more details. The Bangkok Airways also provide daily flights Bangkok-U-Tapao-Phuket and Bangkok-Samui-Phuket. Call 2293456-63 in Bangkok or (076)-212341 & 225033-5 in Phuket for details.

Travel within Phuket

Phuket offers convenient intra-island transport services. Tuk-tuks serve within municipal area or can be hired to go to other places; rates are dependent on distance and negotiable.

Rod Song Taew (modified pick-ups) and regular buses run from the Talad Sod (fresh produce market) near the fountain on Ranong Road to the beaches and other places. Departure every thirty minutes starting from six o'clock in the morning until six in the afternoon. Fares are 10-20 Baht depending on the distance.



Information Development Section
Tourist Service Division
TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND
4 Ratchadamnoen Nok Ave. Bangkok 10100
Tel: 281-0422 (20 Lines)
E-mail Address: tatinfo@ksc15.th.com

Transfer service between airport and town is provided by taxis which also deliver passengers to various beach-sites in varying rates. From town there is transfer to the airport according to scheduled flight departures. Buses leave the Tour Royal Enterprise office on Vichitsonggram Road, tel: (076)-255268-71, every hour between 6.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

There are regular bus services to neighboring provinces such as Krabi, Nakhon Sithammarat, Pang-nga, Ranong, Surat Thani, Satun, Hat Yai, Takua Pah and Samui island. Departures are from the Phuket Bus Terminal on Pang-nga Road (Tel: (076)-211480, 211977).

Inter-provincial flights are available. Thai Airways International flies to Surat Thani, Nakhon Sithammarat, Trang and Hat Yai. For more details call 2800070-90 in Bangkok or (076) 211195, 212499, 212946 in Phuket. Bangkok Airways operates flights between Phuket - Samui and Phuket - Ranong (tel: 2293456-63 in Bangkok and (076) -212341, 225033-5 in Phuket).

ATTRACTIONS

PHUKET TOWN

The compact provincial town serves mainly as a dormitory and shopping center. Splendid colonial style residences built by late 19th-century tin and rubber barons and shophouses from the same period provide distinctive character.

Rang Hill (เขารัง) offers a pleasant view of town and boasts Thailand 's first Fitness Park, a series of hillside sculptural tableaux which enhance keep-fit calisthenics.

Ko Si Re (เกาะสิเหร่) is a small island, some 4 kms. northeast of Phuket township, separated from the main island only by the small Thachin cannal, and hosts the biggest Sea Gypsy village in Phuket..

The Phuket Butterfly Farm and Aquarium (สวนผีเสื้อและสวนควาเรียมภูเก็ต) is only 3 kms. from town and can be reached by taking the Yaowarat Road and then turn left at the Sam Kong village intersection. It has a fascinating collection of such tropical creatures as butterflies, insects, fish and corals all arranged in natural surroundings. Open daily from nine in the morning until five thirty in the afternoon. Tel: (076) 215616, 210861

Phuket Orchid Garden and Thal Village (หมู่บ้านไทย) , located on Thepkasattri Road about 3 kms. from town, offers cultural performances demonstrating the Thai way of life with folk dances, Thai boxing, the uniques aspects of Phuket and the South, a handicraft center, an orchid farm and an elephant show. Show times are 11.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m.

Chana Charoen Crocodile Farm (ฟาร์มจระเข้ชนะเจริญ) contains an exciting aquarium with some 1,000 marine, freshwater and estuarine crocodiles and alligators and is located just outside of town. Open daily 9.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.

Several operators arrange local tours, beach trips, visits to cultured pearl farms, island cruises and exploration, scuba-diving "seafairs".

Motorcycles, jeeps and automobiles may be rented to explore Phuket 's many lovely beaches.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand 's office on Phuket Road.Tel: (076) 212213, 211036 is geared to provide all relevant and current information.

OUTSIDE TOWN

Phuket 's Indian Ocean coastline boasts the finest beaches while the eastern coastline overlooks some 30 lesser islands occupying largely tranquil seas. Islands vary greatly in size. Some are large enough to sustain fishing communities, coconut plantations, sea crocodiles, deer and wild boar. Others are little larger than massive rocks. Others again resemble fortresses, are riddled with caves containing the birds' nests prized by gourmets.

Counterclock-wise from Phuket 's northern tip, the island 's major beaches, temples and botanical parks are as follows:-

Sirinath National Park (อุทยานแห่งชาติสิรินาถ) is about 30 kms. from town. Proceed on the Thepkasatri Road past the Talang District intersection. Take a left turn at km. No. 21-22 km. or go straight on to turn left for 2 kms. at the road to the airport. The park occupies a total area of 90 sq. kms., or around 56, 250 Rai and has an uninterrupted 13-km.-long stretch of beaches staring at:-

The Hat Nai Thon (หาดในทอน) which can be reached by taking the road to the national park and turn left at the 21-22 km. marker. On reaching the turn to Ban Saku, turn left and go on for another 3 kms. Hat Nai Thon. It has a large open cover which serves as excellent shelter from the wind and the sea, and is suitable for swimming.

The Hat Nai Yang (หาดในยาง) is where the park headquarters are located. This is a beach blessed with shady pine trees providing excellent opportunity for swimming and relaxation. Off-shore is a large coral reef which serves as habitat for several species of sea life, particularly the sea turtles.

The Hat Mai Khao (หาดไม้ขาว) , also known as the Airport Beach (Hat Sanambin), can be reached by taking the Thepkasatri Road on to the Sarasin Bridge, then take a left turn at the direction sign pointing to Hat Mai Khao. It is the habitat of the sea cicadas and turtles.

The other beach in the Sirinat National Park is **Hat Sal Kaeo** (หาดทรายแก้ว), long stretch a white sandy beach with groves of pines along the shore from Hat Mai Khao to the Sarasin Bridge, the northern-most of all.

Wat Phra Thong (วัดพระทอง หรือ วัดมุด) is where only the upper half of a large Buddha statue emerges from the ground. Legend has it that during the invasion of Muang Talang in 2328 B.E. (circa 1785), the Burmese tried in vain to excavate the statue to take to back. Each time they dug into the ground, swarms of hornets would swoop on them and they had to give up. Later, the visible part of the statue was covered with gold by the villagers and has remained as such until today. It is located about 20 kms. from Phuket town past the Talang district office.

Also about 20 kms. from town is **Wat Phra Nang Sang** (วัดพระนางสร้าง), located on the Thepkasatri Road at Talang district. An old and historical landmark of Phuket, Wat Phra Nang Sang was once a fort resisting Burmese invasion around 1785. Inside the old Ubosot are enshrined the three oldest and largest Buddha statues made of tin. Called the Three Kings, they are positioned in the midsections of another three large statues.

The Khao Phra Thaeo Wildlife Sanctuary (อุทยานสัตว์ป่าเขาพระแทว) is located in Amphoe Talang about 20 kms. from Phuket town. Declared a wildlife sanctuary in July of 1969, it has 13,925 Rai of rich and fertile land and is the habitat to several types of wild animals. Major attractions include:-

The Tone Sal Fall (น้ำตกต๋นไทร) , twenty two kilometers from town on the Thepkasattri Road past the Amphoe Talang intersection, then turn right and proceed on for another 3 kms. Although small in size, it nevertheless provides a cool, shady area for relaxation and the flow during the rainy season is quite strong.

Another waterfall in the sanctuary is the **Bang Pae Fall (น้ำตกบางแป)** which is located at Tambon Pa Khlok past the statues of Thao Thepkasattri Thao Sisunthon. There is an arboretum and a nursery to rehabilitate captured gibbons before returning them to the wild. For nature enthusiasts, the sanctuary has mapped out three walking trails. Further information may be obtained from the Nature Study Center.

The Thalang National Museum (พิพิธภัณฑสถานแห่งชาติถลาง) displays the way of life, culture and history of Phuket and the south and is located in Amphoe Thalang. Open daily except Monday and Tuesday from 9.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. Admission is 30 Baht per person. For more information call (076) 311-426.

Ao Bang Thao (อ่าวบางเทา) , a long stretch of sandy beach suitable for swimming and other water sports, is about 24 kms. from town. Take the Thepkasattri Road north to the statues of Thao Thepkasattri/Thao Sisunthon then turn left onto Sisunthon Road until Hat Surin. Then turn right to reach Ao Bang Thao.

About 24 kms. from town is **Hat Surin (หาดสุรินทร์)** , which can be reached on Route No. 402. After reaching the Heroines Statues, turn left and proceed on for 12 kms. It is a beach bordering on a hillside. To the north are groves of large pine trees and there is a golf course to the right. Hat Surin is not recommended for swimming because of its steepness and heavy seas and winds during the Monsoon season.

About one kilometer from Hat Surin is **Laem Sing (แหลมสิงห์)** which offers small but white sandy beach; to the left is a scenic rocky cape called Laem Sing. To reach the beach visitors can ask permission to cut through private road, or take a detour along the hillside slanting to the beach.

Hat Kamala (หาดกมลา) is some 26 kms. from town center. From the Heroines Statues, turn left past Hat Surin and Laem Sing. Kamala beach is about 2 kilometers long, quiet and not crowded.

To reach **Hat Kalim (หาดกะหลิม)** take the same route to Hat Patong. Once in Patong, turn right to Hat Kalim which is a small beach with large rocks and coral reef. Accommodation is available.

Hat Pathong (หาดป่าตอง) , 15 kms. from town, is Phuket 's most developed beach. Cabin and bungalow complexes, hotels, bars, nightclubs, discotheques, shops and restaurants front the crescent bay. Windsurfing, snorkelling, sailing, sunbathing and swimming dominate the major activities.

20 kilometers and 17 kilometers respectively from town are **Hat Karon (หาดกะรน)** and **Hat Kata (หาดกะตะ)** . Both are long and peaceful and eminently suitable for swimming and sunbathing.

The View Point (จุดชมวิว) is located mid-point between Hat Nai Han and Hat Kata Noi from which the views of three beaches can be seen.

A small bay next to Hat Nai Than past the Phuket Yacht Club is **Ao Sen (อ่าวเสน)** , peaceful and picturesque with white, clean sand.

Hat Nai Han (หาดในหาน) is a beach next to Lane Promthep about 18 kms. from town. Although not so long, the beach has white, clean sand. Beyond the beach is a swamp called Nong Han. Separating the sea and the swamp is the Nai Han beach. Not recommended for swimming during May-October because of the Monsoon season.

The nearby **Laem Phromthep (แหลมพรหมเทพ)** forms Phuket 's southern most point and is the perfect place from which to enjoy spectacular sunsets and the sea.

Ko Kaero (เกาะแก้ว) is an off-shore isle about 3 kms. out from Hat Rawai and can be reached in 30 minutes by boat. It offers picturesque beaches and underwater scenery. There is also a replica of the Holy Footprint on the island.

To the east, the palm-fringed **Hat Rawai** (หาดราไวย์) about 17 kms. from town hosts Phuket's Chao Le people (sea gypsies). Several off-shore islands have gleaming white beaches and dazzling underwater scenery which attract fishing enthusiasts and scuba-divers.

Another small beach, about 16 kms. from town on highway No. 4024, is **Laem Ka Yai** (หาดแหลมกาใหญ่) from which boats can be rented to visit nearby isles.

To the northeast is **Ao Chalong** (อ่าวฉลอง), some 11 kms. from town, which extends in a board sweep. A few kilometers from the bay is **Wat Chalong** (วัดฉลอง) where statues of Luang Po Chaem and Luang Po Chuang, Phuket's most revered monks, are enshrined.

Finally, on the southernmost tip of Laem Panwa (แหลมพันวา) some 7 kms. from town is the **Marine Biological Research Center** (ศูนย์ชีววิทยาทางทะเล) and **Phuket's Aquarium** (สถานแสดงพันธุ์สัตว์น้ำ) which displays hundreds of exotic, grotesque and flamboyantly colorful marine species found in Phuket's teeming waters. Open daily from 8.30 in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Admission fee is 20 Baht per person. For more information call (076) 391126, 391041

Off-shore Trips around Phuket and in the Andaman Sea

Phuket is well-equipped to provide off-shore trips making it a center of tourism center of the Andaman sea. Trips can be arranged to see forests and mountains, rocky formations, beaches, coral reefs and fishing. Most of Phuket's 39 satellite islands are located to the east. Islands of special interest include:-

Ko Racha Yai (เกาะราชาใหญ่) with its gleaming beaches can be reached by chartered boat from Ao Chalong. Traveling time is about 2-3 hours during off-Monsoon season (December-April). Sightseeing services are available from tour operators in town. Accommodation at Raya Andaman Resort (tel: (076) 381710-2).

Noted for its exotic corals is **Ko Mai Thon** (เกาะไม้ท่อน) which is also suitable for scuba-diving and fishing. Travel and accommodation arrangements can be made at the Mai Thon Resort (076) 391159 at its town office and (076) 214954-8 on the island.

Ko Hei (เกาะเฮ) is known for its beautiful beaches and unspoiled corals and about 5 kms. by boat from Hat Rawai. The Coral Island Resort can handle both travel and accommodation arrangements. Call (076) 281060-2 at its town office or the resort itself at (076) 214779, 224793, 225794.

The terrain of **Ko Lon** (เกาะโลशन) is mountainous with level land along the shore. Ferry service from Ao Chalong at 8.00-9.00 a.m. at fare of 150 Baht per person. Chartered long-tail boats 800 Baht. Accommodation is at the Lon Island View (Tel: (076) 381347, 381858).

Other off-shore islands of Phang-nga, Krabi and Satun can be visited with services of tour operators in Phuket.

DINING / SHOPPING / NIGHTLIFE

Standard western fare is found in all major hotels. Thai, Chinese and Islamic foods are available island-wide. Phuket's seafood, probably Thailand's most delicious, is prepared in variety of succulent styles.

Southern dishes can be spicy hot but are well worth sampling. Tropical fruits abound, particularly local pineapples and coconuts.

Gift shops customarily stock popular handicrafts from all over Thailand, and local products such as hand-crafted coral and shell ornamentations, exotic seashells and cultured pearls.

Phuket's nightlife is comparatively sedate and is concentrated in the town center and Hat Patong offering restaurants, bars, traditional massage, nightclubs and discos.

MAJOR EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

On March 13 every year, the **Thao Thep Kasattri and Thao Sisunthon Fair** is held to commemorate the two great heroines who rallied the Talang people to repel Burmese invaders. Many activities and celebrations are organized.

The Seafood Festival (เทศกาลอาหารทะเล), held around May yearly, is designed to publicize the delicious seafood of Phuket and attract visitors during the rainy season. Activities include a Marine Tourism Resources Parade, seafood stalls, demonstrations of regional cuisines and cultural shows.

The Vegetarian Festival (เทศกาลกินเจ) is held from the 1st to the 9th day of the waxing moon of the 9th Chinese calendar month which fall roughly around September-October. During the festival, townspeople will get their food from various shrines. Many rites and rituals based on mythical beliefs are performed such as fire-walking and climbing of ladders with knife-edged rungs. There are processions around town with on-lookers throwing fire-crackers. The tradition is believed to offer virtues to the gods and celestial beings to protect Phuket and its people.

The Phuket Travel Fair (เทศกาลเปิดฤดูกาลท่องเที่ยว), held on November 1, was first initiated in 1985 at Patong to welcome in the tourist season and designed to foster cooperation among tourism-related operators both in the private and public sectors. Many colorful and interesting activities are organized, such as merit-making in the morning, water sports contests, a Miss Visitor Contest, among others.

First organized to celebrate the 60th birthday anniversary of His Majesty the King, the **Phuket King's Cup Regatta** (งานแข่งเรือใบชิงถ้วยพระราชทาน) has now become a popular annual event held on December 5, His Majesty's birthday. Entries from all over the world join into vie for the coveted trophy.

GIFTS AND SOUVENIRS

Phuket offers many souvenir products made out of marine resources, as well as wares made from tin, lacquer, rattans and silk. Giftshops are located mainly along Rasda, Pang-nga and Montri roads, or along various beaches (Rawai, Promthep, Kata, Karon, Patong, Surin, etc.).

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